IN THE CLAIMS

1 (Cancelled)

2 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, wherein, in said sequence of (a), said sIL-6R is fused to IL-6 via a peptide linker molecule.

3 (Currently Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 2, wherein said linker ~~is a very short, non-immunogenic linker~~consists of about 3 amino acid residues.

4 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 3, wherein said linker is a tripeptide of the sequence Glu-Phe-Met.

5 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 2, wherein said linker is a peptide of 13 amino acid residues of sequence Glu-Phe-Gly-Ala-Gly-Leu-Val-Leu-Gly-Gly-Gln-Phe-Met (SEQ ID NO:1).

6 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, being sIL-6RδVal/IL-6 having a tripeptide linker of sequence Glu-Phe-Met between the C-terminus of sIL-6R and the N- terminus of IL-6, said chimeric protein having the sequence of SEQ ID NO:7.

7 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, being the sIL-6RδVal/L/IL-6 of SEQ ID NO:7 in which a 13 amino acid peptide linker of SEQ ID NO:1 is

substituted for the Glu-Phe-Met of residues 357-359 of SEQ ID NO:7.

8 (Cancelled)

9 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, wherein said sIL-6R/IL-6 is produced in mammalian cells.

10 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 protein according to claim 9, wherein said sIL-6R/IL-6 is produced in human cells.

11 (Previously Amended). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 9, wherein said sIL-6R/IL-6 is produced in CHO cells.

12-15 (Cancelled)

16-26 (Withdrawn)

27-32 (Cancelled)

33 (Previously Amended). A pharmaceutical composition comprising as active ingredient a chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient.

34-36 (Cancelled)

37 (Withdrawn)

38 (Currently Amended). A chimeric glycosylated soluble interleukin-6 receptor (sIL-6R)-interleukin-6 (IL-6) polypeptide (sIL-6R/IL-6), ~~comprising~~consisting of:

not human protein?

(a) an amino acid sequence which is a fusion product of the naturally occurring ~~form~~ sequence of sIL-6R, including the Ig-like domain and the receptor pre-membrane region, ~~and~~ fused to the naturally occurring ~~form~~ sequence of IL-6, optionally including a non-immunogenic linker therebetween, which linker does not prevent the chimeric polypeptide from triggering dimerization of gp130 in human cells; or

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(b) an analog of (a) which differs from the sequence of (a) by no more than 30 changes in the amino acid sequence of (a), each such change being a substitution, deletion, addition or insertion of a single amino acid, which analog is capable of triggering the dimerization of gp130 in human cells.

39 (New). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38 consisting of the amino acid sequence of (a).

40 (New). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, wherein said linker has no more than 30 amino acids.

41 (New). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 39, wherein said linker has no more than 30 amino acids.

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42 (New). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 38, wherein said amino acid sequence of (a) has no linker.

duplicate

43 (New). A chimeric sIL-6R/IL-6 according to claim 39, wherein said amino acid sequence of (a) has no linker.

44 (New). A chimeric glycosylated soluble interleukin-6 receptor (sIL-6R)-interleukin-6 (IL-6) polypeptide (sIL-6R/IL-6), consisting of:

(a) an amino acid sequence which is a fusion product of the naturally occurring sequence of sIL-6R, including the Ig-like domain and the receptor pre-membrane region, fused to the naturally occurring sequence of IL-6, optionally including a non-immunogenic linker therebetween, which linker does not prevent the chimeric polypeptide from triggering dimerization of gp130 in human cells; or

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(b) an analog of (a) encoded by a nucleic acid sequence that hybridizes to a DNA sequence encoding (a) under stringent conditions, which include washing conditions 12-20°C below the calculated Tm of the hybrid under study, which analog is capable of triggering the dimerization of gp130 in human cells.

? breath of the molecule.